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(From left) **Datuk Razali Ibrahim**, **Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi** and **Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani** may be made ministers. **Datuk Seri Husni Hanadzlah** is expected to move to a new portfolio.

CABINET RESHUFFLE IMMINENT?

THE prime minister is expected to reorganise his cabinet as early as today, appointing several new ministers and deputy ministers.

A good number of them are likely to be fresh faces.

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Promotion for 3 deputy ministers?

CABINET REVAMP:
Several new faces to fill vacancies, two may get new portfolios

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is expected to carry out a much-awaited cabinet reshuffle exercise as early as today.

It is likely to be the last shake-up of the government's leadership before the next general election.

Several changes are on the cards, which could see the appointment of as many as four ministers and four deputy ministers.

Najib, who in May revealed plans to reshuffle the cabinet line-up following Barisan Nasional's thumping victory in the Sarawak election, is set to announce several new faces to fill vacant positions.

The *New Straits Times* understands that the swearing-in for the new cabinet members is scheduled for tomorrow.

However, another source said the announcement on the reshuffle may be made only tomorrow.

Names have yet to be confirmed, but Putrajaya sources told the NST that at least two existing cabinet members might be moved to other portfolios.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah is slated to be appointed as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of the Economic Planning Unit.

The portfolio was previously held by Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar, who stepped down after his term as a senator ended this month.

It was also learnt that Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani, who is currently deputy finance minister, may be promoted and succeed Husni as the new second finance minister.

Senior Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) leader and Kapit member of parliament Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi may be appointed plantation industries and

commodities minister, replacing Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas.

The portfolio was left vacant following Uggah's resignation after winning the Bukit Saban seat in the Sarawak election and was appointed as Sarawak deputy chief minister.

It was also learnt that PBB's Lawas lawmaker Datuk Henry Sum Agong may replace Alexander as deputy rural and regional development minister.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak political analyst Associate Professor Dr Jeneri Amir said the possible appointment of two leaders into the cabinet was justified.

"The post of plantation industries and commodities minister was previously helmed by Uggah, who is also the PBB senior vice-president.

"Hence, it is only right for the post to be filled by a PBB member of parliament. This makes Alexander the right candidate since he is a senior leader in the party.

"Should Alexander be promoted, his successor should also be a member of parliament from the same party," said Jeniri yesterday.

Another source said Muar lawmaker Datuk Razali Ibrahim, who is currently deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department, may be promoted to a full minister.

There is also speculation that MIC deputy president Datuk Seri S.K. Devamany might replace Datuk M. Saravanan as deputy youth and sports minister. Devamany had beaten Saravanan to the party's No. 2 post last November.

Two fresh faces, namely Kuala Selangor lawmaker Datuk Imhohizam Ibrahim and newly elected Sungai Besar lawmaker Budiman Mohd Zohdi, are also said to be on the radar to become deputy ministers.

The duo may fill the positions left

vacant by former deputy plantation industries and commodities minister Tan Sri Noriah Kasnon, who died in a helicopter crash in May, and former deputy domestic trade, co-operatives and consumerism minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah, who stepped down to become Kedah menteri besar.

Political analysts said the impending cabinet reshuffle was part of Najib's preparations to help BN gear up for the 14th General Election, slated to be held by 2018.

"By strengthening the cabinet, Najib can now focus on preparing for the next general election.

"There is also the possibility that the reshuffle is meant to prepare BN for snap polls," said Professor Dr Zaid Ahmad from Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Universiti Sains Malaysia's Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the reshuffle could be the last one before the next general election.

"Besides adding new faces, Najib will also drop those who did not perform well.

"Some may see this as a minor reshuffle, but Najib wants a strong team that can help him win the next general election."

Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani, from Universiti Utara Malaysia, said the deputy minister appointments would allow younger members of parliament to play an important role in the government.

"Young leaders will be given an opportunity and appointed as deputy minis

ters. Najib needs to give younger members of parliament the chance to hold higher positions in the government because they are the future of BN." **Additional reporting by Hana Naz Harun and Adrian Lai**

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